

Statement of Significance

The Holtite Manufacturing Company, better known as the Cat's Paw Rubber Company, located on the corner of Warner and Ostend Streets in South Baltimore was once the largest firm in the United States engaged exclusively in the manufacture of rubber and composition heels and soles. Close to both the railroad and harbor, the company easily imported raw rubber from the Far East and shipped its product nationwide. Although now manufactured by the American Bilt-Rite Corporation, Cat's Paw, the brand name of Holtite's soles and heels is still a familar trade-mark in shoe repair shops throughout North America and Europe. The "Get a Grip on Yourself" products have made this former Baltimore company familar to thousands of she wearers.

## MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST

B-1410

MAGI #041410 3714

## INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Holtite Manufacturing Company

AND/OR COMMON

Cat's Paw Rubber Heels Building

**2 LOCATION**

STREET &amp; NUMBER

Warner and Ostend Streets

CITY, TOWN

Baltimore

VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

Maryland

COUNTY

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

## CATEGORY

☐ DISTRICT☒ BUILDING(S)☒ STRUCTURE☐ SITE☐ OBJECT

## OWNERSHIP

☐ PUBLIC☒ PRIVATE☐ BOTH

## PUBLIC ACQUISITION

☐ IN PROCESS☐ BEING CONSIDERED

## STATUS

☐ OCCUPIED☐ UNOCCUPIED☐ WORK IN PROGRESS

## ACCESSIBLE

☒ YES: RESTRICTED☐ YES: UNRESTRICTED☐ NO

## PRESENT USE

☐ AGRICULTURE☐ MUSEUM☒ COMMERCIAL☐ PARK☐ EDUCATIONAL☐ PRIVATE RESIDENCE☐ ENTERTAINMENT☐ RELIGIOUS☐ GOVERNMENT☐ SCIENTIFIC☒ INDUSTRIAL☐ TRANSPORTATION☐ MILITARY☐ OTHER**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Sweetheart Realty Company

Telephone #: 301-363-1111

STREET &amp; NUMBER

10100 Reisterstown Road

CITY, TOWN

Owings Mills

VICINITY OF

STATE, zip code

Maryland

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Baltimore City Courthouse

STREET &amp; NUMBER

Fayette and Calvert Streets

CITY, TOWN

Baltimore, Maryland 21202

STATE

Liber #: RHB 2723

Folio #: 551

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

None

DATE

☐ FEDERAL ☐ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☐ LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

**7 DESCRIPTION**

B-1410

**CONDITION**

☐ EXCELLENT  
☐ GOOD  
☒ FAIR

☐ DETERIORATED  
☐ RUINS  
☐ UNEXPOSED

**CHECK ONE**

☐ UNALTERED  
☒ ALTERED

**CHECK ONE**

☒ ORIGINAL SITE  
☐ MOVED      DATE \_\_\_\_\_

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DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Cat's Paw Rubber Factory is two buildings on the corner of Warner and Ostend Streets in South Baltimore. The older original building is at the northern end of the complex, the newer one at the south.

The East Facade of the old building is of a heavy timber frame, four stories high and seven bays wide. The roof is flat and there is a corbled brick cornice. The top two floors are empty. The new building is three stories high and eight bays high with two loading docks onto the street. It is used for storage.

The North Facade is fourteen bays wide altogether. The older section is four bays wide and four stories high, with a door at one end. In the newer section the original 9/9 paired sash windows have been replaced, and there is a fire escape. The far right section of the north facade is the latest addition, a long low storage building with a garage door.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1918

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Holtite Manufacturing Company, better known as the Cat's Paw Rubber Company, located on the corner of Warner and Ostend Streets in South Baltimore was once the largest firm in the United States engaged exclusively in the manufacture of rubber and composition heels and soles. Close to both the railroad and harbor, the company easily imported raw rubber from the Far East and shipped its product nationwide. Although now manufactured by the American Bilt-Rite Corporation, Cat's Paw, the brand name of Holtite's soles and heels is still a familiar trade-mark in shoe repair shops throughout North America and Europe. The "Get a Grip on Yourself" products have made this former Baltimore company familiar to thousands of shoe wearers.

Historical Significance:

In 1918, two Baltimoreans, Albert Esterson and Morris Eisen bought the "Cat's Paw" trademark from the Walpole Rubber Company and began operation at the corner of Warner and Ostend Streets in the southern section of the city. Although the company began as a small operation in a single 50' x 100' abandoned warehouse, the demand for rubber heels and soles was so great that the firm rapidly expanded to include several adjacent rowhouses, warehouses and the property of the Reihle Showcase Manufacturers across the street. Holtite provided "Cat's Paw" soles and heels not only to local shoe repair stores and manufacturers such as Hess Bootery but also on a national basis.

Ironically, the Cat's Paw Rubber Company, as Holtite was known in Baltimore, underwent its greatest period of expansion during the 1930's as a result of greater consumer demand to resole soles. The company opened a Canadian factory in Drummondville -Quebec and in 1934 diversified the Warner Street plant to include pro-

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

cont'd

**9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Interview with Paul J. Fineman, past president of Holtite Mfg. C  
 Power Pictoral, no. 55 (June, 1946), pp. 14-16  
 Querv file, Md Room, Enoch Pratt Free Library

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

**10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY \_\_\_\_\_

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION \_\_\_\_\_

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE \_\_\_\_\_

COUNTY \_\_\_\_\_

STATE \_\_\_\_\_

COUNTY \_\_\_\_\_

**11 FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME / TITLE

Linda Daur

ORGANIZATION

Baltimore Industrial Museum

DATE

November 1980

STREET & NUMBER

217 N. Charles Street

TELEPHONE

301-396-1931

CITY OR TOWN

Baltimore, Maryland 21201

STATE

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature, to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 Supplement.

The Survey and Inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

RETURN TO: Maryland Historical Trust  
 The Shaw House, 21 State Circle  
 Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
 (301) 267-1438

Holtite Manufacturing Company  
Hist. Sign.  
p. 2

duction of a combination metal plate /rubber heel. This particular heel, the "2 in 1 Stratewalk", was patented by the firm in 1936.

Shortly after, the company again enlarged its Baltimore operation. This included a new warehouse, the installation of a Poanberry mixer and variable speed mill to mix raw materials and the construction of an electric substation with three-phase converters. In the early 1940's, the company added a new compressor building, mill and 2nd story addition to the central wing of the main building. Final alterations to the factory included the installation of a cooling system, with water and air pipes in 1955.

The Cat's Paw Rubber Company was the country's largest producer of rubber soles and shoes throughout the early twentieth century. Rubber was shipped to Baltimore from the Far East and brought to the plant via the railroad. The raw materials, rubber and oils, were then mixed in large batches in a mill where it was worked and rolled to proper thickness and consistency. The rubber then underwent a second mixing in a smaller mill before being passed through the stamping press. Stamped out soles were later cured under heat and pressure. Holtite's market expanded over the years to include parts of Europe, South America, the Phillipines, as well as North America.

In 1967, the American Bilt-rite Rubber Company of Chelsea, Massachusetts bought the Holtite Manufacturing Company, better known as the Cat's Paw Rubber Company. For six years the factory continued to produce heels and soles under the Cat's Paw trademark. In 1973, the factory was bought by the Maryland Cup Corporation which presently uses the buildings for making foam drinking cups.





HOLTITE MANUFACTURING COMPANY OCCUPIES AN AREA OF SEVERAL CITY BLOCKS AT OSTEND AND WARNER STREETS. THE MAIN FACTORY IS SHOWN HERE. RECENT ADDITIONS INCLUDE THE COMPRESSOR BUILDING AT THE RIGHT, AND A SECOND STORY ADDITION TO THE CENTRAL WING OF THE MAIN BUILDING, WHERE THE NEW MILL IS HOUSED.

## CAT'S PAW PRODUCTION DOUBLED BY RECENT ADDITIONS AT HOLTITE MFG. CO.

IMPROVEMENTS and expansions, including a new building to house machine shop, heating plant and motor-driven compressor equipment, completed last fall by Holtite Manufacturing Company, add over 1,300 kw to this customer's connected electric load and almost double their output capacity.

This firm, which celebrated its 25th anniversary two years ago, has grown from a modest beginning to become probably the largest in the United States engaged exclusively in the manufacture of rubber and composition heels and soles.

"Cat's Paw," the brand name of the product, is a familiar trade-mark in shoe shops all over the nation.

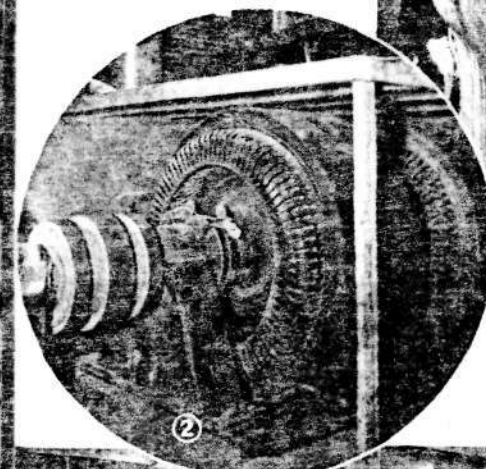
Besides providing additional working space, the new construction made possible the rearrangement of operations to expedite line production. An extensive conveyor system, utilizing motor drive and gravity, was installed. The movement

## Steps in Making "Cat's Paw" Heels and Soles

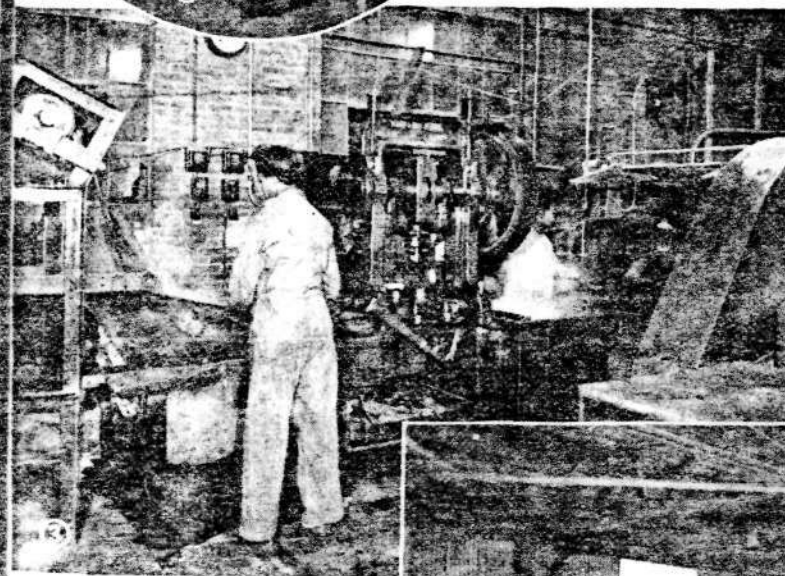


1. From the Banbury mixer on the floor above, a batch of material drops into this big rubber mill where it is worked and rolled to proper consistency and thickness. Note strip of finished material leaving roll.

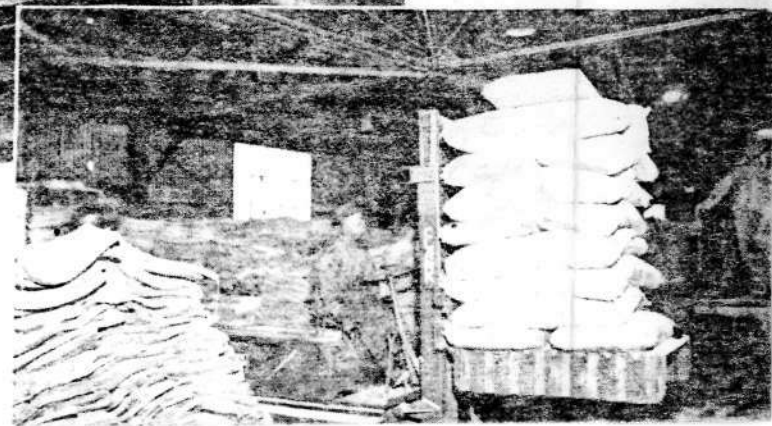
2. The synchronous motor driving the Banbury mixer is a dual unit—300-600 hp—to provide low-speed or high-speed operation.



3. Stamping rubber soles. Material for this machine is brought from the big mill (Fig. 1) and given additional working on a small rubber mill at left of this view. The strip that is taken from the rolls passes directly through the stamping press. Stamped out soles are later cured under heat and pressure.



4. Tons of raw material, including crude rubber and synthetic rubber, are carried in stock. Electric lift trucks are used in the warehouse for loading and unloading trucks and freight cars.



1. Instrument board where control is maintained of pressure and air lines.

2. Compressor room, showing motor-driven hydraulic pump.



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Holtite Manufacturing Company  
Baltimore City, MD  
1914 Baltimore Topographical  
Survey Commission



Cato Paw (Hostile Manufacturing Co.)  
1914



## NAER INVENTORY

Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

B-1410

1. SITE I.D. NO B 1 4 1 0		3. PRIORITY		4. DANGER OF DEMOLITION? (SPECIFY THREAT) <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> UNKNOWN	
2. INDUSTRIAL CLASSIFICATION Manufacturing		5. DATE		6. GOVT SOURCE OF THREAT OWNER ADMIN Sweetheart Realty Company	
8. NAME(S) OF STRUCTURE HOLTITE MANUFACTURING COMPANY (Cat's Paw Rubber Heals Building)		9. OWNER'S ADDRESS 10100 Reisterstown Road			
10. STATE COUNTY M D		COUNTY NAME Baltimore		CITY/VICINITY Owings Mills	
11. SITE ADDRESS (STREET & NO) Warner and Ostend Streets		12. EXISTING SURVEYS <input type="checkbox"/> NR <input type="checkbox"/> NHL <input type="checkbox"/> HABS <input type="checkbox"/> HAER-I <input type="checkbox"/> HAER <input type="checkbox"/> NPS <input type="checkbox"/> CLS <input type="checkbox"/> CONF <input type="checkbox"/> STATE <input type="checkbox"/> COUNTY <input type="checkbox"/> LOCAL <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER			
13. SPECIAL FEATURES (DESCRIBE BELOW) <input type="checkbox"/> INTERIOR INTACT <input type="checkbox"/> EXTERIOR INTACT <input type="checkbox"/> ENVIRONS INTACT		14. UTM ZONE EASTING NORTHING SIGN 1 8 3 5 9 7 3 0 4 3 4 8 5 2 0 UTM ZONE EASTING NORTHING SIGN SCALE 1:24 1:62.5 QUAD NAME Baltimore West			
15. CONDITION 70 <input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT 71 <input type="checkbox"/> GOOD 72 <input type="checkbox"/> FAIR 73 <input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED 74 <input type="checkbox"/> RUINS 75 <input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED 76 <input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED 77 <input type="checkbox"/> DESTROYED 85 <input type="checkbox"/> DEMOLISHED		16. INVENTORIED BY Linda Daur AFFILIATION Baltimore Industrial Museum DATE November 1980			
17. DESCRIPTION AND BACKGROUND HISTORY, INCLUDING CONSTRUCTION DATE(S), HISTORICAL DATE(S), PHYSICAL DIMENSIONS, MATERIALS, EXTANT EQUIPMENT, AND IMPORTANT BUILDERS, ENGINEERS, ETC.  See Statement of Significance					

(CONT OVER)

18. ORIGINAL USE Rubber shoe heel factory		PRESENT USE Paper goods factory		ADAPTIVE USE	
19. REFERENCES—HISTORICAL REFERENCES, PERSONAL CONTACTS, AND/OR OTHER Query file, Enoch Pratt Free Library Interview with Paul J. Fineman, Past president of Holtite Mfg. Co. Power Pictorial, No. 55 (June 1946) pp. 14-16					

(CONT OVER)

20. URBAN AREA 50,000 POP. OR MORE? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO		21. <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO		22. PUBLIC ACCESSIBILITY <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES, LIMITED <input type="checkbox"/> YES, UNLIMITED <input type="checkbox"/> UNKNOWN <input type="checkbox"/> NO		23. EDITOR INDEXER	
24. LOCATED IN AN HISTORIC DISTRICT? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO		NAME		DISTRICT I.D. NO		GPO 1	

B-1410

#### REFERENCES (CONTINUED)

[illegible]


HOLTITE MANUFACTURING  
COMPANY

18<sup>3</sup> 59920 43 48540



Holtite Manufacturing Co. 1410  
U.S.G.S. 7.5 Baltimore E. Quad  
83 59730 43 48540





PROPERTY OF HOLTITE  
MFG. CO.  
A.S.

SCALE 1 INCH=50 FEET

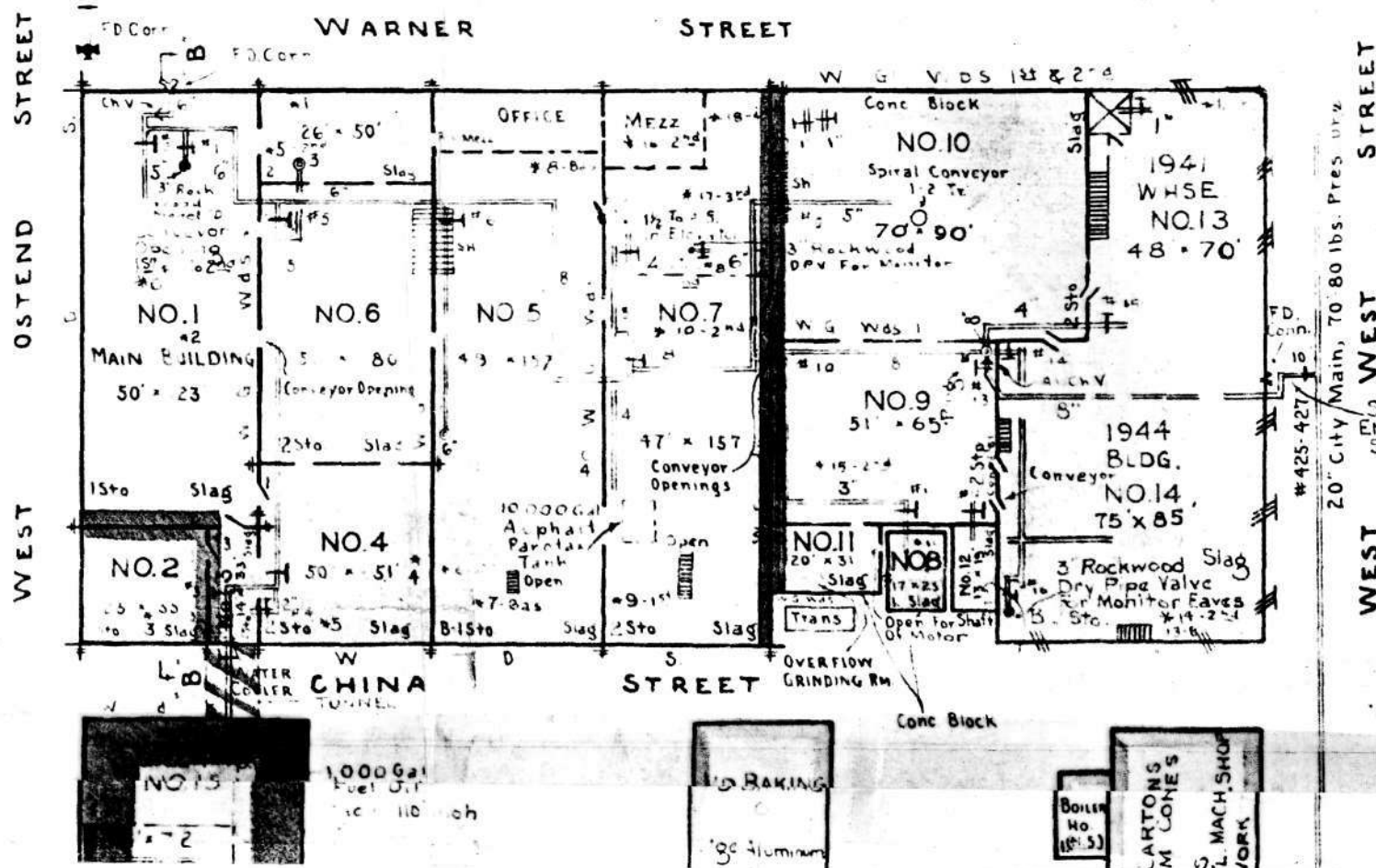
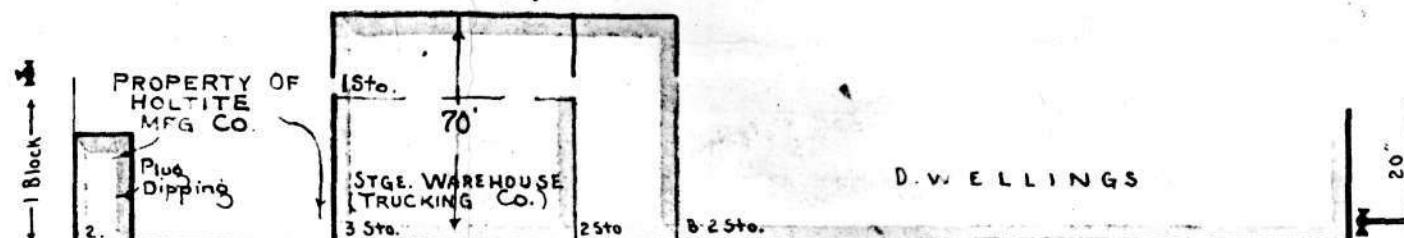
B-1410

EASTERN REGIONAL OFFICE

HARTFORD, CONN.

DECEMBER 20, 1950

5532



Hamming, inspecting & sorting  
 & sorting, 1400 2400 & Rolling  
 Paper boxes inspecting Heat Tap

44 ABD ~~1941 WHSE.~~  
NO 14 NO 13

PROPERTY OF HOYTILE  
MFG.

(N.S.)  
(Stg. Raw Stock)  
Plus Rolling  
sto.

VACANT LAND  
(PROPERTY OF HOLTITE  
MFG. CO.)

NO. 6

DWG  
DWG  
DWG

1000 Gal  
Fuel Oil  
to 110 oh

Conc Block

Boiler  
No. 5

CARTONS  
M CONES  
L. MACH. SHOP

AKTONT & Co. Ltd.



B- ~~1410~~ 1410

Holtite Manufacturing Co.

Baltimore City, MD

Neg. Loc: MD Historic Trust

Peter Liebhold 8/81

Looking Southeast  
(Warner St. facade)





B-~~mmmm~~ 1410

Holtite Manufacturing Co.

Baltimore City, MD

Neg. Loc: MD Historic Trust

Peter Liebholt 8/81

Looking North west  
(Ostend Street)